

# CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

## European Craniopharyngioma Research Grant 2027

### Background

Craniopharyngioma is a rare central nervous system tumour associated with considerable long-term morbidity, including visual impairment, endocrine dysfunction, hypothalamic injury, metabolic complications, neurocognitive difficulties, and reduced quality of life.

Despite significant advances in surgery, radiotherapy, molecular biology, imaging, rehabilitation, and supportive care, important questions remain regarding tumour biology, treatment selection, prevention of treatment-related morbidity, long-term follow-up, and survivorship.

### 1. Purpose of the Grant

The European Craniopharyngioma Research Grant aims to support a high-quality scientific project that may improve the understanding, diagnosis, treatment, follow-up, rehabilitation, or quality of life of patients affected by craniopharyngioma.

The proposed research must be conducted at an institution based in the European Union with demonstrated clinical and/or scientific activity in the field of craniopharyngioma.

### 2. Available Funding

A total amount of **€40,000** is available.

The funding is expected to support one research project. However, the Scientific Review Board reserves the right to divide the available funds between more than one proposal if projects of comparable scientific merit are identified and such an allocation is considered scientifically appropriate.

Eligible costs may include:

- personnel costs directly related to the project;
- laboratory analyses and research consumables;
- imaging, molecular, biological, or statistical analyses;
- data collection and database development;
- patient-reported outcome and quality-of-life research;
- research-related travel between collaborating institutions;
- publication and dissemination costs;
- other justified expenses directly related to the proposed research.

The grant should not normally be used for routine clinical care, major equipment purchases, institutional overheads, or costs incurred before the official start of the award.

Any institutional overhead costs must be clearly declared and kept to a minimum.

### 3. Research Areas

Applications may address any scientifically relevant aspect of craniopharyngioma, including, but not limited to:

- tumour biology and molecular characterisation;
- mechanisms of tumour development, progression, or recurrence;
- biomarkers and precision medicine;
- surgical decision-making and reduction of surgical morbidity;
- radiotherapy strategies and long-term treatment effects;
- radiological diagnosis, response assessment, and imaging biomarkers;
- hypothalamic dysfunction and hypothalamic obesity;
- endocrine and metabolic complications;
- visual outcomes and visual rehabilitation;
- neurocognitive, psychological, and behavioural outcomes;
- quality of life and patient-reported outcomes;
- rehabilitation and survivorship;
- paediatric-to-adult transition of care;
- clinical registries and multicentre datasets;
- translational and preclinical research;
- innovative therapeutic or supportive-care approaches.

Projects may be clinical, translational, preclinical, epidemiological, or multidisciplinary.

Collaborative and multicentre proposals are encouraged, provided that the lead institution is based in the European Union and has demonstrated expertise in craniopharyngioma.

### 4. Eligibility

The Principal Applicant must:

1. be a clinician, researcher, scientist, or allied health professional involved in craniopharyngioma research or care;
2. hold an appointment or formal affiliation with an eligible host institution;
3. conduct the proposed project primarily at an institution located within the European Union;
4. demonstrate that the host institution has established clinical and/or scientific activity in craniopharyngioma;
5. be able to complete the proposed project within the proposed grant period;
6. obtain all necessary ethical, regulatory, institutional, and data-protection approvals before beginning the relevant research activities.

Applications from early-career researchers are particularly encouraged. Early-career applicants should identify an experienced scientific mentor or senior supervisor.

Only one application may be submitted by the same Principal Applicant.

### 5. Host Institution Requirements

The host institution must provide:

- a formal letter confirming its willingness to host and support the project;
- appropriate research infrastructure and administrative support;
- confirmation that the applicant will have access to the resources required to complete the project;
- evidence of previous or ongoing clinical or scientific activity related to craniopharyngioma.

Evidence of relevant activity may include publications, participation in clinical or translational studies, management of a craniopharyngioma patient cohort, contribution to registries or collaborative networks, or recognised expertise in a relevant specialist field.

## 6. Project Duration

The proposed project should normally be completed within **12 to 24 months** from the date on which the grant agreement is signed.

Any request for a different duration must be clearly justified.

## 7. Application Requirements

Applications must be submitted in English as a single PDF document and must include:

### Applicant and project information

- project title;
- name and contact details of the Principal Applicant;
- host institution and department;
- names and affiliations of co-investigators and collaborators;
- requested funding;
- proposed project duration.

### Scientific proposal

The scientific proposal should not exceed **five pages**, excluding references, and should include:

1. background and rationale;
2. unmet clinical or scientific need;
3. aims and hypotheses;
4. study design and methodology;
5. study population, biological material, datasets, or experimental models, where applicable;
6. statistical or analytical plan;
7. feasibility and access to the required resources;
8. anticipated results;
9. potential clinical and scientific impact;
10. project timeline and milestones;
11. plans for dissemination and future development.

### Budget and justification

A detailed budget must be provided, explaining how each requested expense is necessary for the completion of the project.

Any co-funding or additional financial support must be declared.

## **Curriculum vitae**

A curriculum vitae of the Principal Applicant, with a maximum length of three pages, including up to ten relevant publications.

Brief curricula vitae may also be included for key co-investigators.

## **Host institution letter**

A signed letter from the Head of Department, Research Director, or authorised institutional representative confirming institutional support for the project.

## **Evidence of craniopharyngioma activity**

A brief description of the host institution's clinical and/or scientific experience in craniopharyngioma, including relevant publications, research programmes, collaborations, patient cohorts, or participation in clinical studies.

## **Ethics and regulatory statement**

The application must indicate whether ethical, regulatory, data-protection, or animal-research approvals are required and describe their current status.

Approvals are not required at the application stage unless already available. However, all necessary authorisations must be obtained before the relevant research activities begin.

# **8. Scientific Review Board**

Applications will be evaluated by a Scientific Review Board composed of internationally recognised experts in the clinical care and research of craniopharyngioma:

- **Professor Todd Hankinson**
- **Dr Andrea Carai**
- **Dr Angela Mastronuzzi**
- **Professor Hanneke van Santen**

All members will be required to declare any actual or potential conflicts of interest.

A Board member will not participate in the review, discussion, or scoring of an application where a conflict of interest has been identified. Where additional expertise is required, the Board may request an external independent review.

# **9. Evaluation Criteria**

Applications will be evaluated according to:

- scientific quality and methodological rigour;
- relevance to craniopharyngioma;

- originality and innovation;
- feasibility within the proposed timeframe and budget;
- experience and suitability of the applicant and host institution;
- potential impact on patient care, scientific knowledge, or future research;
- quality of the collaborative and multidisciplinary approach;
- appropriateness of the requested budget;
- potential to generate preliminary data, future funding, or sustainable multicentre collaboration.

Particular consideration may be given to projects with the potential to produce a meaningful benefit for patients and families.

The decision of the Scientific Review Board will be final.

## **10. Submission Procedure**

Applications must be submitted electronically as a single PDF document to:

**angela.mastronuzzi@opbg.net**

The email subject line should state:

**Application – European Craniopharyngioma Research Grant 2027 – [Applicant surname]**

The application deadline is:

**31 December 2026 at 23:59 Central European Time**

Late or incomplete applications may not be considered.

Receipt of the application will be confirmed by email.

## **11. Selection and Award Ceremony**

The Scientific Review Board will complete its evaluation and communicate its decision to applicants by:

**30 January 2027**

The grant will be formally awarded during a public ceremony at the:

**9th Postgraduate Craniopharyngioma Course**

**Rome, Italy — 22-23 April 2027**

The successful applicant, or a designated representative of the research team, will be invited to attend the ceremony and briefly present the aims and expected impact of the selected project.

## 12. Award Conditions

The successful applicant will be required to:

- sign a grant agreement with **AIEOP (Italian Society of Pediatric Onco-Hematology)**;
- use the funds exclusively for the approved project;
- notify the organisers of any substantial change to the project, research team, host institution, budget, or timeline;
- submit an interim report, if requested;
- submit a final scientific and financial report;
- acknowledge the grant in all presentations, abstracts, publications, and other outputs arising from the project;
- present the results at a future edition of the Postgraduate Craniopharyngioma Course or another designated scientific meeting;
- inform the organisers of publications, presentations, subsequent grants, or other outputs arising from the funded research.

Any unspent funds must be returned unless an extension or budget reallocation has been formally approved.

## 13. Payment

The grant will normally be transferred directly to the host institution.

The payment schedule and administrative conditions will be specified in the grant agreement.

## 14. Publications and Intellectual Property

The researchers and host institution will retain responsibility for the conduct of the project and publication of its findings.

Any intellectual property generated through the project will be managed according to the policies of the host institution and the terms of the grant agreement.

The funding organisation will not seek to influence the interpretation or publication of the results.

Both positive and negative findings should be disseminated whenever scientifically appropriate.

## 15. Key Dates

- **Application deadline:** 31 December 2026
- **Scientific Review Board decision:** by 30 January 2027
- **Notification of applicants:** by 30 January 2027
- **Public award ceremony:** 9th Postgraduate Craniopharyngioma Course, Rome, April 2027
- **Expected project start:** following completion of the grant agreement and all required administrative procedures

## 16. Enquiries

Questions regarding eligibility, scientific scope, or the application procedure may be addressed to:

**Angela Mastronuzzi**

IRCCS Bambino Gesù Children's Hospital, Rome -Italy

angela.mastronuzzi@opbg.net

## **Commitment to Patients and Families**

This grant has been made possible through fundraising dedicated to improving research and care for people affected by craniopharyngioma.

Applicants are encouraged to consider the relevance of their proposed work to patients and families and, where appropriate, to include patient perspectives, quality-of-life outcomes, or patient and public involvement in the research programme.